

REMARKS

Claims 1-43 are pending. Applicants elect traverse Group I (claims 1-21) for examination on the merits. Applicants reserve the right to prosecute non-elected subject matter in a further patent application. Notwithstanding the above election, reconsideration of the restriction requirement is requested because examination of all pending claims would not constitute a serious burden. Although the inventions identified by the Examiner are separately patentable, both the need for compact prosecution and the public interest would be served by examination of all claims in a single application. Thus, claims 22-43 should not be with-drawn from consideration.

In the alternative, Applicants disagree with the allegation that the pending claims lack unity of invention, and therefore belong to different groups of inventions. Although they agree with the Examiner's conclusion that the inventions are separately patentable, Applicants' traversal is based on the pending claims being so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1. Therefore, Applicants submit that the pending claims should be examined together in this application. In accordance with the M.P.E.P., the claims are linked to form a single general inventive concept. In particular, the Examiner's attention is directed to M.P.E.P. § 1850 III A Combinations of Different Categories of Claims (8th Ed., Rev. 6, Sept. 2007), specifically part (B).

It was alleged in the Action that the inventions listed by the Examiner as Groups I to III and V do not relate to a single general inventive concept because they lack the same or corresponding special technical features under PCT Rule 13.2. But here, the elected claims of Group I are directed to a process and the apparatus of Groups II and V are specifically designed for carrying out the claimed process. Therefore, Applicants

submit that claims 1-34 and 36-43 have unity of invention in accordance with PCT Rule 13 and as discussed in M.P.E.P. § 1850.

Upon an indication that claims to the elected process are allowable, Applicants submit that claims directed to the non-elected apparatus of claims 22-34 and 36-43 would then have to be searched and examined. This delay in the search and examination of claims properly prosecuting in this application would not be in the public interest.

Applicants earnestly solicit an early and favorable examination on the merits. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned if any further information is required.

Respectfully submitted,

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